

Exhibit No. 3Date 2 - 8 - 11Bill No. SB 84

Senate Bill 84
February 8, 2011
Presented by Jim Kropp
Senate Finance and Claims Committee

Mr. Chairman and committee members, I am Jim Kropp, Law Enforcement Bureau Chief for Fish and Wildlife Division of Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks (FWP). I am here in opposition of Senate Bill 84.

The bill proposes to remove over \$200,000 dollars from FWP each year and deposit the funds into the state general fund. The majority of these dollars are restitution from convictions from unlawfully taken big game animals. The specific restitution amounts for game animals are set in statutes that were determined by prior legislators. The 2007 Legislature passed SB 115 sponsored by Senator Jent. Some of you may remember that this bill was a part of a group of legislation called "The Poachers package". SB 115 established restitution payments to be utilized by FWP for long-term investigative costs and to pay for the prosecution of major wildlife crimes. FWP currently contracts with the Attorney General's office to handle this aspect of prosecution for serious wildlife crimes. Together, we prosecute 20 major poaching rings each biennium.

The unlawful commercialization and blatant theft of our state's public wildlife resources is a serious threat and cost to the people of Montana. This bill will only reverse significant progress made over the past four years in fighting that threat.